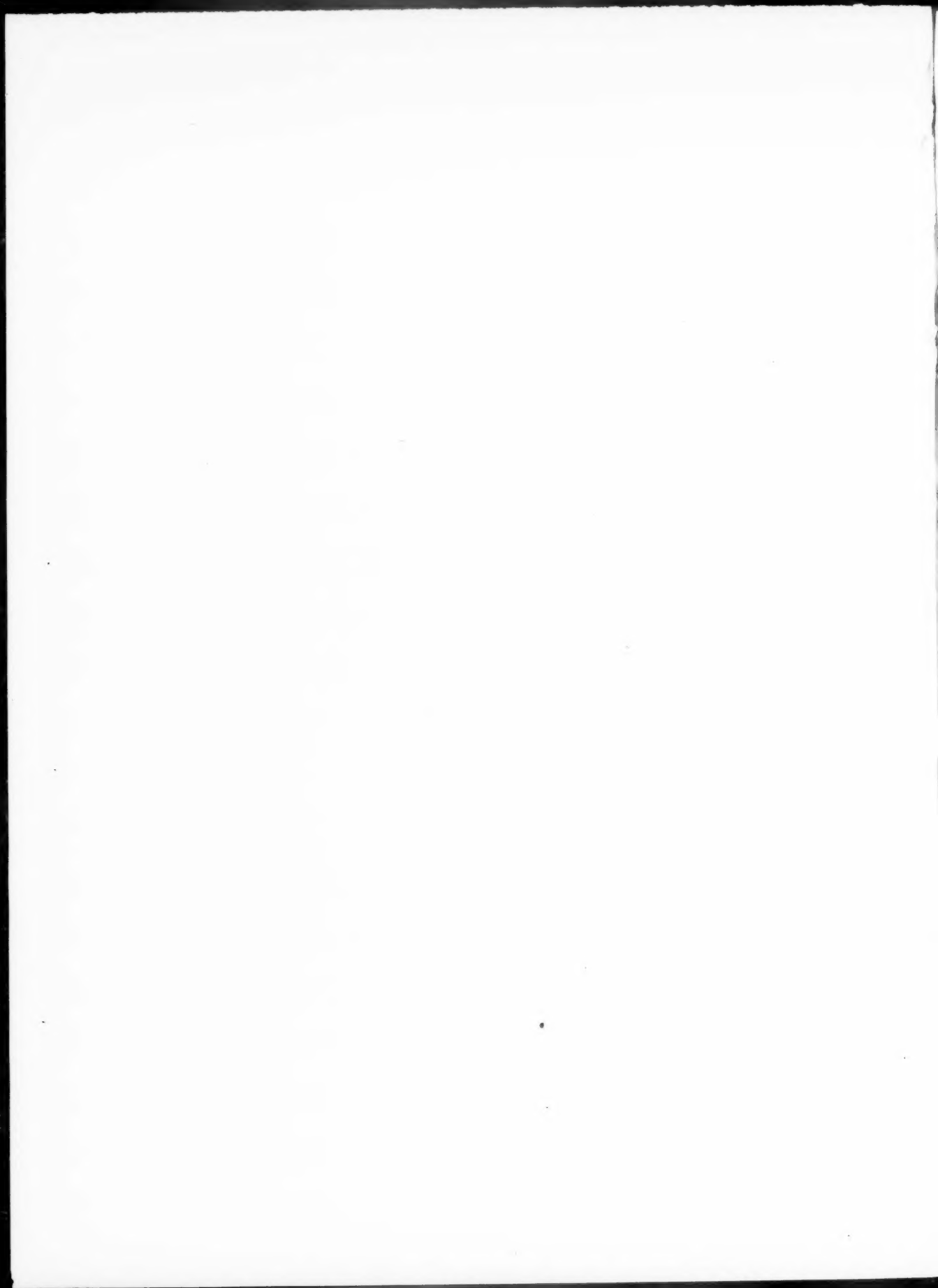


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Eighty-third Session—1916-17.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT, MR. ERNEST NEWTON, A.R.A.,
at the Opening General Meeting, Monday, 6th November, 1916.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—In the ordinary course of events I should at this moment be listening to my successor in office with that peculiar relish which an actor feels when he steps from the stage and, seated amongst the audience, watches the new player sustaining the rôle which had hitherto been his. Circumstances have, however, willed it that my tenure of office should be prolonged, and that, for the third time, I should be addressing you as President.

So far as the ordinary work of the Royal Institute is concerned the history of the past year has been almost without events. The Council and the Committees have met as usual, and have dealt with the necessary business.

One matter that has engaged our attention has been the resumption by the Commonwealth Government of the Competition for the Canberra Parliament House. You will remember that this competition, which was to be International, was postponed at the outbreak of the War. It is difficult to understand why it should be resumed now, when all the young architects of the Empire and of the Allied Countries are engaged in other and sterner duties. We have felt compelled to protest very strongly against the resumption, and have also communicated our views to the two leading French Societies. I need not here go into the matter in detail, as you will find the correspondence in the JOURNAL.

The War Committees have been active, and the Civic Survey has continued its most useful work. It is gratifying to know that the small exhibition held by the latter at the Congress of the Sanitary Institute some little time ago created great interest, and it is hoped that a more complete Exhibition may be held in our own rooms early next year.

Our anxieties as to the future have, of course, not been lessened by the action which the Government was compelled to take last July in issuing an Order in Council controlling private building for a time, in order not only to keep steel for the purposes of the war, but to secure building labour for urgent work in connection with munition buildings and other vitally necessary national undertakings. It was necessary, too, to relieve the railways as far as possible from the carriage of building materials. The Ministry of Munitions, which has the carrying out of this difficult and delicate task, realises the effect of this control on all those connected with the great industry of building; and, without being indiscreet, I may say that its attitude is most sympathetic. Every effort is made to adjust the conflicting claims of individuals and the State, but, of course, the State has, and must have, the first claim. By the adoption of a system of inspection it has been possible to ensure that no building in course of erection is stopped arbitrarily and without due regard being given to its protection and security. In many cases it has been found possible to continue the work until enough has been done

to enable the building to be made use of. In other cases, where the structure was nearing completion, it has been found possible to roof it and to finish the interior as, for the moment at any rate, it is only certain classes of labour that are required for State purposes.

I should like to enlarge on this subject, but, for reasons which I think you will readily understand and appreciate, I feel that it is better to avoid going very closely into details. I can, however, assure you that every case is gone into carefully and examined from every point of view, and that it is of value to have these cases considered from the technical standpoint. The staff is composed of architects accustomed to deal with buildings of every kind, and every effort is made to administer the Order with scrupulous fairness. It is perhaps hardly necessary for me to tell you that this work is not done in the traditional office hours of 10 to 4 with a two-hour lunch interval. It would be comforting to be able to give some idea of the duration of this control, but, although I am sure it will be relaxed at the first possible moment, no one can forecast future developments.

You will have noticed, no doubt, that the Ministry, through the Press, has made the thoughtful and timely suggestion that the public would do well to take advantage of the lull in building operations to get plans prepared now for future schemes. If this advice is followed generally it will help architects to tide over this difficult period, and we must hope that the *diminuendo* will be followed by a *crescendo* and a long *forte fortissimo* passage.

It cannot, however, be denied that the outlook for architects at the present moment is not very brilliant, but at a time like this everyone can do something, and if there is little or no architectural work to be done we can do a thousand-and-one other things. Our training tends to make us versatile. We already have some architects making shells and aeroplanes, others making explosives, and some even navigating barges for the carriage of munitions. There is man's work to do in many directions—in offices, on the land, everywhere. The work of hundreds of supposed "indispensable" young men can be done, and done well, by architects of intelligence and ability. Our practice obliges us to have an insight into everybody's business. We have made a large contribution of our young men to the Army, and we old ones are not going to sit still and bewail our fate just because for the moment there is no market for our special "line." If our young men can serve in the ranks, we can serve in the ranks too—not in the trenches, but in offices, factories, anywhere where our work is wanted, and where we can release a young man to take his place in the fighting line.

Almost since the war began, certainly from the first winter, our newspapers have been full of paragraphs, cunningly disseminated by Germany and innocently printed by the British Press, stating that Germany was so short of men that she was driven to take the halt, the blind, and the maimed into the Army. Then accounts of food riots, mutinies, loss of *moral*, follow each other at discreet intervals. All these crafty tricks are intended to cause a slackening of effort here, and they have not been entirely without result. I think no one who follows events intelligently can have any doubt about the future if only we realise that *now* is the time not for slackening for an instant, but for a supreme effort. We have to put every ounce into the scale. Everyone must do something or suffer something. There are a thousand ways of losing, but only one way of winning, and the one way is to concentrate all our energies on the war, to will victory and to work for it, to realise that the power of Germany is only beginning to be broken, and that the victorious end will come about not only by the valour of our Navy and Army, but by the work of every man and woman in the country.

Although I have said our one duty is to concentrate all our efforts on the prosecution of the war to a victorious end, that does not mean that we should not think of wise plans for the future. This can be our recreation. I have a shrewd notion, however, that whatever schemes we may work out, our future will be determined for us by the men who have done the fighting. We read perhaps a little too much of plans for "trade after the war." Too much thought and energy are being put into these schemes for a future over which we have no control. It is to be hoped, however, that in these vast commercial projects the claims of the workers, now the fighters, are not overlooked. It will be a

disgrace to us as a nation if after the war we are content to let them live in the drab and dreary districts which many people seem to look upon as the inevitable type of district for a working population. In London alone we have square miles to destroy and replan. Our people must not only have the same pleasant surroundings which we consider indispensable for ourselves, but they must earn enough and have leisure enough to enable them to enjoy life. The amount spent on the war in one week would be enough to sweep away many of these dreary neighbourhoods and replace them by cheerful streets and squares of pleasant and comely houses.

When once the citizens of London begin to realise the disgrace of squalor and ugliness the architect will come into his own again. It is not only the outlying districts that cry aloud for change. We have a glaring example in the very centre of London, and, thanks mainly to the untiring energy of Sir Aston Webb and the London Society, we seem within measurable distance of carrying out a great scheme for sweeping away Charing Cross railway bridge and replacing it with a fine road bridge worthy of our great city. It is a most hopeful sign that Parliament, which still reflects public opinion, is on the side of the improvers. Possibly the number of those who care much for a beautiful city is small, but if the rest of the community at any rate can be brought to see that there is a commercial value in architecture, and that it pays to have a fine city with great streets and squares and fine bridges, the money difficulty, which is the rock on which so many schemes have suffered shipwreck, will be negotiated safely. The series of articles in the *Observer*, by Mr. John Burns, Sir Aston Webb, and Mr. Reginald Blomfield, will help immensely to attract public attention to the subject and to give an air of reality and nearness of realisation to a project which has been discussed for several years. It is hardly necessary to say that the Institute gives its complete and unreserved support to a scheme for effecting so great an improvement.

Other great projects will have to be taken in hand after the war, and we can console ourselves during the lean time of the present by dreaming dreams of the great things we are to do in the future. If the war is to lead to a change in the surroundings of the workers, it is clear, too, that there will be changes in the methods of work. The Trade Unions, for the purposes of the war, have given up their "customs" on the distinct pledge that after the war they shall be at liberty to resume them. I know very little at first hand about these customs, but I have been told that so far as the building trade is concerned they are based on the assumption that limiting the amount of a man's output is the only way to make the work go round so that each man may have a share, the idea being that there is a certain average amount of work per annum and an ascertained number of men to do it. I believe this to be quite unsound. Limiting the amount of work a man can reasonably do not only keeps skilled men at the level of less skilled, but makes building cost more, so that less is done. Many, many years ago I suggested a system of two classes of workers. The more skilled or first class were to work quite unfettered and to receive higher wages; the second class, also unfettered, would receive less. The incentive for the second-class man to improve himself so as to be promoted to the first class would be great. The result would be more output, better-paid work, and a levelling up instead of down. This was a very juvenile effort on my part, and I am not even sure that it was original, but I still believe it has the germs of soundness, and that the Trades Unions, with their fine organisation, could do something on these lines.

Other changes and other reorganisations must also be taken in hand if we ever again have to cope with a situation which requires the whole organised strength and skill of the community. We have at the present moment completely organised societies, institutes, and associations of architects, engineers, and of scientific men of all kinds, but they are all isolated links with nothing to bind them into a chain. If, instead of this isolation, all these societies were linked together as part of a State organisation ready for use in a case of emergency, the Government would have ready to hand the whole machinery of these organisations and could put their hands on the men they wanted and get all the information they required in a few hours. Suppose that this organisation had been in existence

when war broke out. Representatives of all these bodies would have been summoned. The Institute would have been entrusted with work proper to architects. Engineers would have been allocated their work, chemists theirs, and all without waste, overlapping, or confusion, because the machinery was already in working order.

The amount of help that the civil organisations could give to the Government is incalculable; I cannot, of course, speak for other bodies, nor do I know to what extent their organisation was made use of, but so far as the Institute is concerned, I can say that we were ready directly the war broke out, and that not only then, but more than once later the whole of our machinery was placed at the disposal of the Government, and I have no hesitation in saying that had we been made use of many delays and mistakes would have been avoided and much expense saved. I have lately had the duty of examining vast numbers of plans which have ranged from cottages to factories covering acres; every type of construction is represented, proving, if proof were required, that we have men competent to design and carry out on proper business and economical lines every known type of building.

Although we properly regret that so little use has been made of us as an organised body, and are inclined to blame the authorities for their shortsightedness, we must remember that because of the lack of touch which I have before referred to, we were strangers to the Government—and, after all, Governments are like individuals, and have a dread of the unknown. It is always so much easier to go along the well-known tracks. We all have our favourite builders, to whom we like to entrust our work, and view a strange contractor with disquiet until he, in his turn, has proved his worth. It was then natural perhaps, though regrettable, that when the emergency arose the unknown path was avoided. It must be part of our work in the future to forge the connecting link so that if ever again a like emergency should arise we should find ourselves called upon and ready to place our skill and experience at the service of the State.

As is perhaps natural, I fear I have so far considered the war mainly as it affects us as architects, but although as islanders, whose country so far has been free from the invader, it is a little difficult to imagine what it must mean to those countries where the actual fighting is going on, we must not think only of our own sorrows and tragedies. Think how Belgium has suffered, and of the woes of our great ally, France, dear to us architects; and of Russia, the mysterious, which is being freed and regenerated by the blood of her sons; and of Italy, whose very name warms our hearts; of Serbia and Roumania—all have suffered, and are suffering even more than we are, and are giving up all present happiness now, so that future generations shall be free and at peace.

I cannot conclude without expressing my most heartfelt sympathy with those who have been bereaved. Their sorrow will be mingled with pride at the thought that their dear ones have given their lives for their country. All of us whose sons are serving live in constant anxiety, and we can only hope that the great sacrifices that we are called upon to make may bear fruit, and that the discipline and sorrow of the present may make us a strong and earnest race to carry on the work of the world in the future.

VOTE OF THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT.

Professor BERESFORD PITE [F.].—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: It falls to my lot to have the honour of proposing a hearty vote of thanks from the Institute to the President for his Address. I am sure that the note which the President has struck again to-day, that note of dignified and hearty patriotism, has been quite the right note for the occasion and the note that this Institute most warmly welcomes and to which it most truly responds. The gratitude that we are under to the President for the earnest and constant attention which he has given to the prime requirements of the nation at the hands of our profession is one that we appreciate. And I think, Sir, in spite of the great difficulties and trials of your years of office, the peculiar services which you have rendered to the profession under these most trying circumstances are sure to be remembered and valued.

I may be permitted to remark on one or two points in the Address. First, with regard to the Australian Competition, which came so early in your remarks. Of course, that position is a very difficult one, and one with which we are very closely connected. It is evidently impossible that the architects of the Allied nations should be able to give the attention that they would wish to give, the study and the care that they feel this great problem of Australia demands from them, and we deplore it. But I cannot help feeling that, on the other hand, we must bear in mind this fact: that Australia wants to start these buildings as soon as the war is over. When the war is over, the return of labour demanding employment will be very considerable indeed; and one can quite imagine that they will be unwilling to wait the one or two years which the preparation of the Competition and working drawings would entail before starting such an important work. And it seems to me that the only result, under the present circumstances, will be to give the job away to those who are not engaged on the side of the Allies—to the neutrals, or even to the enemy himself if he can be induced to compete. Any such conclusion of the matter would be as disastrous as it can well be. The only suggestion I can make, Sir, is that we should urge upon the Australian Government, under the circumstances, the great importance of abandoning the Competition altogether, and making up their minds to commission an architect well qualified to carry out the work, as the proper and most satisfactory way, under the circumstances, of arriving at a conclusion.

With regard to the whole question of professional relief and the preparation of the Civic Survey Plan, speaking among ourselves, we do feel a great debt of gratitude to the Committee which has organised and which is taking the opportunity of employing highly valuable and suitable skill in the preparation of what, I hope, will be a work of monumental and real importance. The opportunity is a unique one, and our

thanks are certainly due to those who have organised this admirable and successful movement.

With regard to the future, Sir: the future is, of course, a difficulty with us. But we are getting reconciled to smaller incomes and to narrower means of life with a number of domestic novelties; and I do not imagine that during our lifetime we shall see much opportunity of altering the scale to which we are being reduced. I would only, speaking with considerable feeling as a suffering member of the profession, appeal for the possibility of lowering the rate of subscription of the Fellowship to the rate which Associates now pay, because it seems to me there is not the slightest difference between the status and the privileges of those two orders. But that, of course, I have to leave to the Council. Under the present conditions of compelled economy one sees how important it is that the Institute should have a policy of professional concentration. I should hope that the tendency which has been exhibited during the past few years to multiply professional societies may be taken seriously to heart by the Institute, and that there may be a policy of concentration prepared during this period of pause in architectural activity, so that all the members of the profession may feel, without the struggle of supporting not only the central Institute but also many allied societies, that we are able to economise our subscriptions, to concentrate our forces, and to strengthen the Institute in its representation of the profession. I need not refer in any detail to the bodies which have suffered from the war very much more than ourselves. But I can anticipate that if a helping hand is held out, for instance, to the Architectural Association in its peculiar and most interesting circumstances, and if attention is given by this Institute to the great public matter of town planning—which has called into existence an Institute of its own, but which I would much sooner have seen a branch of this Institute; if the Institute could stretch out its hand to the larger subjects upon which you have commented so clearly in your Address—the need of improved dwellings and increased amenities, the need of sweetening and cleaning homes for our workers, and healing the sore places in our towns—I say if the Institute can concentrate on a policy of public action, uniting itself to the bodies which are engaged in these works, then there is a future for us, in spite of our limited means, of great usefulness and public importance, and there is hope of strength from union, instead of a narrowed usefulness, for us in the future.

But with regard to our own personal activities in a time when there is no work to do, I think, Sir, we may remind ourselves that a century ago, during the great European War, was a time when architectural students and archaeologists were peculiarly active, and engaged on most important work. If we cast our minds back and reflect on what was going on at that period we shall find that the tremendous change which came over

the outlook of English architecture took place then. The great war killed the old English tradition; it stopped the architectural clock; and it was in that period of stagnation and quiet that the great Greek Revival culminated and came to our shores. Winckelman had been at work, and others, preparing the way; it was not a novelty which came from the blue. Great students—Cockerell and others—were busy at that time in the Ægean with the Elgin Marbles, and Greek treasures were being collected and gathered and brought to England. From that moment English Art during the whole of the last century started to move and develop. What is in the air for us now we do not know; but it is clear that the war which is now on will have more gigantic effects upon our outlook, our position, and our future than even the great war of a century ago had. And I beg architects and students to recall the opportunities in their possession of exercising an art which is universal, an art which looks back over the whole history of the human race; an art which is bounded in its periods by such struggles as that with which we are concerned, and an art which expresses by every aspect of it—in its civil, its religious, its military aspect—the permanent activities of its own age. I ask architects of the present day to concentrate upon that outlook, upon that review, and to seek in this period to attain an ideal—a considered, intelligent, critical ideal—of a sane scope and sphere for their art; to try to relate their work to the real necessities and real expression of the age in which they live, so that we may not come out of this merely holding our breath, merely waking as from a dream, but that we may come out of this period and its trial with a newer, purer, more powerful intention to fulfil ourselves in our art, to make our art representative of the great race of which, thank God, we form part, and of the great era in which He has called us to live.—I very heartily and earnestly beg to move that the best thanks of the Institute be given to the President for his Address.

Captain R. BURNS DICK, Royal Garrison Artillery (President of the Northern Architectural Association).—Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen: To be suddenly honoured by an invitation to take part in this important meeting by seconding the vote of thanks to the President came as a startling reminder that I had a past and that my present changed existence had not cut me off from it. But I rather shrank from an active incursion into that world that now seems so unfamiliar and my first impulse was to "regret my inability, &c., &c." However, I found the idea taking hold of me, and there kept recurring to my mind a sentence from a letter I had recently read in M. Jacques-Emile Blanche's *Cahiers d'un Artiste*, written to him from the trenches by an artist friend: "Quelle joie de redevenir soi-même pendant quelques instants!" Why not take advantage of the chance to feel some of the joy of meeting old friends and breathing the old and congenial atmosphere "pendant

quelques instants"? I recalled with a peculiar pleasure the first two or three Council meetings I attended in 1914, presided over by the President of to-day, and then found myself ringing up the C.R.A. for forty-eight hours' leave.

But now that I am here I confess to a feeling of strangeness, for during two years my thoughts have been entirely diverted to the new life, and I fear I come ill equipped to say anything of interest worthy of the occasion. The paramount feeling has been to get this ghastly business over. What does architecture, what does anything matter so long as the nation's very existence is at stake? But after all, I remind myself, this is not the end of all things: the R.I.B.A. still exists, and a very active President is going to give a Presidential Address, even if the great nations are toppling over and burying the peoples in their ruins.

With these thoughts in my mind I strolled out the other evening under the shadow of a great gun, its Titan mass, perched on its revolving platform high above me, silhouetted against a starlit sky and pointing over the impenetrable deep; whilst from numerous points inland shot overhead thin, bright, expanding and unending beams of white light, crossing and intermingling as they searched in every direction the new highways in the heavens that man has conquered by his restless daring.

The occasional challenge of a sentry only intensified the stillness and vastness that penetrated the soul with its awe-inspiring sublimity. But over and beyond the silence and darkness hanging over vast oceans and continents I knew was spread the evil spirit of strife and woe and destruction. Could anything have carried one farther from the now insignificant things of the past—the curious, trifling little things, little people, little thoughts, all once so big, now so shrunken?

With an effort I returned to my thoughts of to-day's meeting: The President is going to give an address. But what, I wonder, will he say? What line will he take? How will he—a creator of beautiful works, with the soul of the artist, if practical in the sense that knows how to infuse into fitness the elements of grace—how will he regard this business so overwhelmingly in possession of earth and sky and sea, these forces of madness and destruction let loose by man on man? Will he be able to carry us through the storm and preserve us for that time when wise and sane guidance will be required for the great renaissance?

He has given the answer to these questions in a way I never really doubted. I have learned of the strenuous life he leads in connection with real war work, yet has he found time to give us of his wisdom in the all too short address we have just heard. The attitude of mind it reveals is to me, if I may say so with all humility, entirely satisfying. Two sentences appear to epitomise the position, and might well be kept in mind by those of us who are "carrying on" until that army of youth and vigour, on whom rests the moulding of the new epoch, returns to take up its greater and

happier work. These are the words I mean: "I have a shrewd notion that, whatever scheme we may work out, our future will be determined for us by the men who have done the fighting. Too much thought and energy are being put into these schemes for a future over which we have no control." Yes, the future is out of our hands. Carry on we must to a certain extent, but the work for which the Institute mainly exists must cease for the time being. A passive submission must be ours so far as the shaping of the future is concerned, with the mind and imagination cleared of all preconceived ideas, ready to be influenced by the new forces now working to some great purpose not yet clearly defined.

Recently, during gun practice, I observed the effects of the "blast" from a gun on a small structure near by, whose door and windows had been securely closed. By the shock of concussion the door was torn from its fastenings, split in two and cast into the interior; windows were broken and the structure seriously shaken. Now if door and windows had been left open, little injury would have resulted. There, it seemed to me, was an excellent illustration of what would happen to universities, institutes, and every centre of social, educational, and industrial activity that closed their doors to the effects of the thunder of present events. Either let the hurricane blast sweep through, carrying with it the dust and decay of the past and clearing the way for the new activity, or be content to see the fabric itself swept out of existence.

Those millions who are facing untold horrors, losing so many of their best by the mighty sweep of the scythe in the hands of the Dread Reaper, but who at times are catching glimpses of the unknown, and who are feeling the strange exaltation of a new-born freedom, are coming back with a new and widened outlook, with a determination to get out of life that something that they only now are beginning to realise is possible to them and is theirs by a right they have earned. It is they who will shape the future. Don't give them the trouble of brushing us aside: let us be ready to aid in the quest for these higher ideals when the time arrives.

We architects, in our own sphere, must remember that the great works we are concerned in are not of our creation. Pericles was more responsible for the great monuments in Athens than was Ictinus and his fellow craftsmen. But the real creators were neither Pericles nor his artists and engineers. These great works were the creation of the nation's manhood, and the beauty which still survives is the permeating soul of the men who faced unflinchingly the invading hosts of a greedy and power-drunken enemy.

No, ours is the business to take the material that is being created and give to it an expression of grace and fitness worthy of the industry and intelligence that have produced it, and which demand from us the ability to make it suitably articulate.

I often think that in this we lag behind the march of the nation's energies. True, the people themselves

have failed hitherto to be persuaded of the value of this aspect of their productiveness, to us a strange shortsightedness. But, allowing for this, we do not always take advantage of the opportunities offered. Science and Industry do not hesitate to scrap those things that new methods and inventions have superseded, whereas we so often hark back to old forms, trying to twist and bend them to uses to which they are quite foreign; we keep trying to force into old moulds new needs, distorting and hampering the free play of their natural tendencies. This has perhaps been inevitable, but somehow I fancy a period is being put by present events to many shibboleths that have tied us to those things that should long ago have been securely walled up in the museums from which they have been dragged by pedantic and unimaginative leaders in every sphere.

In this connection a little thought—perhaps a big heresy—insinuates itself, which I will only whisper: Is there any chance that we and our wonderful Allies *d'outre Manche* with our coming renewal of youth will feel the inappropriateness of still wrapping round a no longer enfeebled body that old garment the "Renaissance," patched with so many faded periods from the creaking loom of the centuries? But this by the way.

It is the nation itself that is at last working out its own salvation on the battlefield; it is the people themselves who will have saved their country; and it is these same people who, having realised their power, will see that where no cost was considered too great to ensure the defeat of the enemy outside the gate, no narrow question of money will be allowed to defeat their legitimate desire for relief from the sordid conditions that disgrace every large industrial centre within. Then will be given to us an opportunity for wise counsel in conjunction with the bolder outlook of our sons returned.

A brighter time will dawn, and the sorrow and sacrifice are not in vain. I have a whole-hearted belief that those better things for the future so ardently hoped for by the President are in the process of conception and will assuredly see the light of day.

I most heartily congratulate the President on the vitality that enables him to accomplish so much valuable work for the State at this time of crisis, and I most cordially second the vote of thanks to him for his wise words to-day, so ably proposed by Professor Beresford Pite.

Mr. H. G. IBBERSON [F.]—The portion of the Address which was perhaps received with most enthusiasm was that advocating a more gracious *home* life for the industrial classes. Might I suggest that an effort should be made to give some of them a more interesting *working* life also? Cannot this Institute put a little pressure on the Government, and induce it to foster by alms and influence the attempts that are being made to keep alive the handicrafts, the really

entertaining things? Without Government help, in the lean years which are before us, so many of these small industries must go to the wall. They will die. And does not the present Arts and Crafts Exhibition show they are worth keeping alive?

You probably say the idea is stale and impracticable: I know it is stale—old at any rate—but is it as impracticable now as it was in the days of Morris? We are used to being interfered with and even helped by Government: if they foster the making of the dyes, why not the hand-loom weaving of the cloth? It is only by unity, and unity nowadays means Government, that we can work out this industrial salvation for a few of our people; the majority will be content with improved houses, better wages, and shorter hours.

Referring to an inference in the President's speech that the building trade is being gently treated by the State—suppressed in all kindness—may I say that only one behind the scenes, as I am, can know how largely this new humanity is owing to the precepts and presence of Mr. Newton himself?

Professor W. R. LETHABY [*F.*]: May I say a word in support of the resolution? I do feel that we want some sort of interim work to carry on here at the Institute. I fully agree that this is not the time for the full programme of evening meetings, but I feel that we need to be kept together from time to time by some interim work, and so I wondered whether it would be possible to hold some sort of informal conferences, strictly among architects, with the hope and intention that we could do something to heal up the internal anarchy of style from which we suffer, more particularly with regard to City works. The country houses are open to whims, and I have no very visionary ideas that much might be done in regard to them. But much might be done, I think, if we were to set about considering the City as a whole, from the point of view of the architectural design. By that I do not mean City planning, on which such splendid work is being done, but units of design which go to make up the architecture of city streets. If bodies of architects could walk down the Strand and down Holborn, and see what all the architectural fuss during the last sixty years has produced, they might wake up to the feeling that something must be done from the public point of view. It is not a question of the whims, the ability, or the genius of the architect: it is a matter of the City as a whole, and something ought to be done from the point of view of the City. And I throw that out as a suggestion, whether something might not be accomplished by small conferences to get round the difficult corner of these conflicting styles, and try to bring about some common platform of view with

regard to buildings in the City. In the same way, we ought to join in other efforts, like the mitigation of the tremendous and terrific advertising plague. Nothing can be done to live in a city which allows advertisements in this way: it is pure anarchy, business blackguardism. It is not thinkable of any ordinary city in the world. In neither America, nor Germany, nor France is it possible, and it must not be possible here. It is not a question of this or that: it is a question of survival: for if we go on in this callous way we shall not survive—indeed, I do not know that it will be worth surviving. Something must be done, and I invite the Institute to help in tackling that.

One little practical point I might further suggest, which might help in the convergence of such a public idea of architectural propriety, or whatever you like to call it. Might not the Institute consider the old status of the creature called the Surveyor-General, and how he came to lapse? I refer to the men in a responsible public capacity—Inigo Jones, Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor, Sir Robert Taylor, and so on right to the beginning of the last century: the most powerful men in the country held the office of Surveyor-General. In some way that lapsed, and the work was taken up by a clerk of the works, or someone else of office-boy standing, and the whole chain of dignity in public work which it typified went by the board. One may speak of this with freedom just now, as by some accident able men seem to fill the position, but this is by accident not by system. I do suggest, as a technical possibility, that the Institute should consider the past status of that official, and the possibility of his revival, or something parallel.

The vote was carried by acclamation.

The PRESIDENT, in acknowledging the vote, said: I cannot conclude without thanking you very much, Professor Pite, for the kind words you have used in proposing this vote of thanks, and Captain Burns Dick for the kind way in which he has seconded it. It is a great pleasure to see him even for a moment restored to civil life. And the suggestions which Professor Lethaby has thrown out will, I think, be likely to bear fruit in the future. It is very difficult to devise anything to keep the Institute going through war time. We are not able to have evening meetings, and there is a difficulty in arranging meetings even for the afternoons. I think most of us felt that the ordinary subjects of papers were a little bit dull and stale during war time. But these conferences, if we did not perhaps take them too seriously, if they could be more in the nature of afternoon tea conferences, with smoking permitted, I think we might profitably organise.

THE ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION.

By A. E. RICHARDSON [F.].

THIS noteworthy exhibition has now been open for a month, and will continue for another fortnight. What it will achieve is impossible to state; its purpose, however, is momentous, for it marks the tertiary stage of the adventure entered upon by William Morris and his band of dreamers. After several visits to the galleries of the Royal Academy it is not so difficult to grasp the meaning of the movement as a whole, and to assume that attitude of disinterested attachment essential to a reviewer; neither is it necessary to have recourse to the excellent Catalogue edited by Mr. Wilson, for the simplicity of the arrangements begins to tell above the blend of colour and seeming confusion. This wonderful show resembles a huge bazaar transported from the Orient to enliven the grey North: so much to the credit of the artists who have endeavoured to add to the amenities of domestic life. There are, notwithstanding, certain reservations, and these will be duly stated. The scope of the Society embraces all the arts, nothing is considered too small to escape attention, hence the widespread appreciation aroused in all quarters through the courage of those enthusiasts who have chosen the present time to proclaim their mission, and it is hard to record an impression of the numerous works without sympathetic emotion. In the main the exhibition is a legitimate attempt to uplift the general tone of artistic product: its object is educational; herein is revealed its secret and its shortcomings, for the artists brought together from the ends of England, while professing high intellectuality, have not yet imbibed the rudiments of discipline. The impetus at the back of the movement and the achievements of the artists are the best safeguards against indiscriminate remarks; no purpose would be achieved by any other than constructive criticism, and once the mind is freed from prejudice against the fantastic tendencies which still persist, the conflict of old theories with modern æstheticism, misplaced originality and strained thought, the sober qualities underlying the works of this coterie of artists make a direct appeal.

Like most other institutions organised for the common good, the Society labours under the disadvantage of having to create an appreciative audience; there is no definite idea of whom the patrons will be composed. In consequence the generality of the goods are beyond the reach of the industrial pocket: they may be coveted by certain members of the middle class, but they are scarcely needed by the cultured rich who possess historical treasures: the excellence of the workmanship and the technique of the articles raises the selling price far above the average purse, and so a new body of customers, recruited from the well-to-do middle class and the newly rich, is importuned to spend money. The majority of the artists whose works are on show

have no true perspective of social conditions or humility of bearing towards the scope of art, doubtless because no director is at the head of affairs to organise their talents or to interpret popular needs; and they should bear in mind that the majority of the public desire modest flowers, not rare orchids. Here another view of the case is presented, that of design. Among the artists a curious doctrine prevails decreeing the art of the peasant to be the only panacea fit to remedy immature taste: this is equivalent to the theory that all ranks of society are constituted alike. The artists are devout in their beliefs, but lack both discipline and comprehensive education, hence they seek to create a new fashion arising entirely out of craftsmanship. They recognise in a superficial way the excellences of design associated with the noblest phases of tradition; and while their works are models of sound construction, the sense of form is lamentable. It has been stated that concept and design are attributes of superlatively higher value than construction or technique; on that reasoning idealistic beauty, elegance of form, charm and character indubitably belong to a sphere of things the craftsman can never attain without reasonable examples to work upon, and from them design anew; but to expect these attributes to thrive without the magic fertiliser of tradition is to imagine a vain thing.

This tendency to create a new order of things, to inspire a fresh fashion, to think hard and intellectually, where quiet reasoning alone is needed, borders dangerously near the attitude of the *poseur*, and leads inevitably to a depressing *cul de sac*. In this exhibition the desire for a new vogue which shall be stronger than fashion has produced a fresh æsthetic cult, which in some respects resembles a grafting of Futuristic imaginings on the sturdy tree planted by William Morris. The movement is theoretically sound, but this strange blending of opposites combined with doubtful experiments will not promote a healthy development. To architects especially the basic aims of the Society should appeal. Here at last is a band of artist craftsmen, the vanguard of what promises to be a great army awaiting employment. There is nothing to prevent these men from engaging upon the embellishment of buildings under the direction of a master whose control is indisputable and whose chief duty is to advise his co-workers. They would welcome the opportunity, and through this agency the aims of master and craftsman would be correlated. At present the Society, despite the number of distinguished architects among its members, appears to have little sympathy with modern building, judging from the experiments displayed. In fact, frank disavowal of the existence of historical sequence would have been better than an attempt to parody its lineage. Architecture in England has long been considered as a lost sister among the kindred arts, and on this score sadly in need of regeneration; but to insist that the culprit should don a species of strait-jacket is too brutal for consideration.

There is much in this Bazaar of the Arts eloquent of supreme endeavour and forceful purpose: a powerful colour sense allied to truthful construction, a creed strenuously pursued on the lines of freshness and vivacity; but these qualities lack force owing to an inappreciation of what constitutes elegance. The artists indulge in the pernicious idea that the present age is out of touch with graceful forms; moreover, that the conditions are so drastic as to militate against elegance. This is one of the chief evils to be combated, for if the depths of precedent are plumbed sufficient material will be found on which to formulate a distinctive policy. Mention can be made at this point of the tail-piece at the end of the Catalogue, in which the artist has very aptly, perhaps subconsciously, epitomised the present exhibition. The design is in the form of a circle, the subject allegorical. Craft is represented as a frail coracle at the mercy of a rough sea. A sturdy boy, in whom we recognise the lineaments of art, weighs down the small bark and bends aloft a sail which is subjected to puffs from the cherubs of Pottery, Glass, Painting, Architecture, Sculpture, Metal Work and Design. Is it intentional that the voyager has no rudder to steer his course, and must perforce depend on the seven cherubs for direction?

The visitor approaches the exhibition through the turnstile at the head of the main staircase, and is confronted with a panorama of what Trafalgar Square might be, but it is more likely that he will form a better estimate of the buildings as they now stand, in spite of the joint failures of William Wilkins and Sir Charles Barry. Further evidence of the Society's attitude to architecture is encountered in the main gallery and also the circular council chamber fitted up with devotional altars. The first gallery, or Retrospective Room, is given up to the early history of the movement. Here are displayed the exhibits of William Morris & Co. On the left is the enormous Burne-Jones painting "The Passing of Arthur," a subject rich in poetic fancy, and this artist's famous cartoon for tapestry "The Passing of Venus," from a drawing by H. Dearle, the original tapestry having been destroyed by fire at Brussels a few years ago. A further gallery displays what are beyond dispute the most ambitious and convincing mural decorations ever attempted in England.

There is a frieze by Mr. Rothenstein showing the granting of degrees to famous men at a university, with a group of young men whose lives have been sacrificed to war, and who are ghostly participants at the ceremony. This frieze is fastidious in rendering, and in many respects owes much to Italian precedent; but the effect is harsh, and the treatment of the scenery inconsistent as a foil to the processional rhythm of the figures. The academic garb of the persons obscures the life-like portraiture, and the prevalent tone of black accentuates the monotony. These are defects capable of rectification which Mr. Rothenstein's experience will doubtless enable him

to overcome in future renderings. In describing the wall decoration by Mr. Augustus John a controversial subject is entered upon. As a realistic experiment it is a remarkable performance, being neither of the photographic nor idealistic variety. It is true to the life, almost brutally so, yet it is fresh in inspiration and cheerful in tone values. This product of Mr. John's fertile imagination opens up a new vista, particularly concerning the decoration of public buildings; but all cannot be enthusiastic over this particular subject, for hard realities are seldom palatable. The chief merit of the design inheres in the simplicity of the conception and its dissociation from the formula of the great easel pictures of the past decade or so. The picture is divided into three parts. In the centre a group of Irish peasant women stand against a background of sea and rock-girt islands; to the right there is a group of fishermen; and to the left the market-place of a small seaport, with figures grouped round a stall. This design is a subtle representation of commonplace life, a plain statement of facts as they exist to-day in out-of-the-way parts of the kingdom, particularly the west coast of Ireland and Cornwall.

In this design Mr. Augustus John has endeavoured to emulate the works of the early fresco painters, and has imparted to his subject the naïve interest permeating the straightforward decorations of Della Robbia, but the costumes and the attitude of the figures grouped in this frieze err on the side of being too natural, and conventional grace is lacking. The mural painting by Mr. Greiffenhagen belongs to a different system, and is more worthy of appreciation by those interested in architectural mural decoration. The same remarks do not apply to the fresco painting by Mr. Sims, which is contradictory in composition and full of ugly contrasts, especially in the pose of the upright female figure. One thing must be understood in regard to this section of the exhibition, and this is, decorative painting in England has hitherto never been attempted on such a scale, and although the specimens of the art now on view are far from satisfactory, they nevertheless initiate a departure full of promise. The architectural gallery contains other mural designs which are convincing but less ambitious; these are somewhat out of scale with the temporary structure, and in consequence cannot be judged at their proper value.

In this gallery there is a model of a Campo Santo or Pantheon which is totally opposed to all academic teaching. The design partakes of a quasi-Byzantine flavour, the plan suggesting reference to Santa Sophia and St. Mark's, but the conception is thin in quality, it is a design forced for the show, like some strange plant reared under artificial conditions. The designer has not been strong enough to produce suitable detail, and has had recourse to meaningless sculptural decoration, besides calling further attention to this weakness by introducing innumerable flagstaffs to foil the chief factors of his building.

The Society would have added very greatly to the architectural interest of their exhibition if they had invited more architects to send in models of buildings of all classes. There should have been a section devoted to houses and cottages, another to churches, and yet another to civic architecture and town planning. The fact that such a collection of designs would have been in some degree retrospective would not have detracted from the purpose of the Society in the least, and it would have had the additional advantage of bringing modern architecture to the notice of the general public, who have very confused notions on the subject.

Apart from the purely architectural interest, some of the galleries have been subdivided into furnished rooms, such as bedrooms, nurseries, and music-rooms, and in this remarkable series a toy-room is prominent. In the furniture department Mr. Gimson is the presiding genius, and under his able direction workmanship and technique have been raised to a high standard, but the aspect of design is still where it was ten years ago. In outline nearly all the furniture smells of the lamp; the exhibits are intricate and complex in form, there is not the touch of dignity and rich simplicity which is the hallmark of the beautiful and the elegant. Style is made up of these abstract qualities, and when the craftsmen who work under Mr. Gimson are made aware of these elementary facts a revolution of ideas will take place. Sometimes Mr. Gimson is content to study traditional forms, and then his work rivals the old, but his personality is too strong to recognise the old masters of design as dangerous rivals, and he is too deeply imbued with Jack-o'-lantern individuality to appreciate the need for courtly behaviour. When an article of furniture smells of the lamp, and in its outline shows that too much thought has been given to its parts, it becomes self-conscious like an overdressed woman, and ceases to be attractive, a fault scarcely condoned by other manifest qualities. Hence it is that almost without exception the furniture, fire-irons, mirrors, clocks, and other appurtenances in the bazaar are devoid of that supreme quality of elegance which is never absent from the products of designers and craftsmen of preceding ages. To some extent, it is true, Mr. Gimson has been compelled to study historical motifs, and as far as construction and technique go his work excels old specimens of the art, which were generally made on the principle of outside show, but his theory of design is too personal and the result tedious. Once this narrowness of outlook is combated, the blind attempts to build up a system of design amounting to a new fashion for movables will be relegated to the limbo of things, for it is unreasonable to take for models the simple furniture and equipment of peasant life and stretch them to the limit of pompous and snobbish complexity. The uninitiated are readily snared by such methods, but the man of true taste will have nothing to do with the productions, and is forced to the storehouse of Mr. Quinney. Wardour

Street and Tottenham Court Road will long flourish, and the wary gentlemen of Bond Street will continue to strip old houses of their treasures, until the Arts and Crafts movement takes cognisance of what is required by the enlightened section of the public. The market is enormous, the number of prospective patrons illimitable, only the right description of goods is lacking. The exhibition itself furnishes one or two instances of the course of action outlined above; for example, the modern spinets and clavichords are models of what furniture design should be. Apart from the question whether such musical instruments are suitable for modern requirements, there are numbers of people interested in them and desirous of possessing one. The design of the case and stand of the large example is the best specimen of modern furniture design in the galleries. This article is related to the distinguished examples of the past even to the minutest details, yet it is impossible to quote any known example which could have been used as a model. The case is modern, the feeling, character and decoration are fresh, and in artistic handling the instrument is sympathetic to the best old work of similar stamp. The craftsmen who have worked under Mr. Gimson have no idea of the wealth of design existing in the larger European tradition; a visit to the Louvre would be profitable to them, for it would at least teach them the fallacy of relying on excessive inlaying for the embellishment of their wares.

In some respects the Society has already succeeded in influencing the design of ordinary articles; this is apart from the travesty of their designs by the manufacturers of Curtain Road and the merchants of a West Central thoroughfare. We have only to inspect the stalls arranged by the Design and Industries Association to appreciate this influence as it has reacted on the ordinary articles of commerce. Here the old-established ritual has been followed, particularly for stoneware, jam-pots and crockery. These articles are real and unaffected, a source of pure joy for the benefit of those who minister to domestic needs from the innermost recesses of dull kitchens.

Another feature of artistic production brought before the gaze of the British public for the first time, entirely owing to the war conditions, is the astonishing display of coloured print-stuffs from the looms of Mr. Sixsmith, the Lancashire manufacturer, which formerly were exported to the West African market to adorn the persons of native chiefs, who in exchange eagerly bartered nuts for oil production in Germany. Now this is no longer possible, English people will be enabled to purchase rare textiles of strong and vivid colouring, which they have been desiring for years, but which no manufacturer has had courage to place on the home market. The most inspiring booth in the bazaar is the toy-room for children, where stands an ornate revolving lectern surmounted by a carved Elizabethan ship. The shelves are full of cunningly wrought toys and delightful dolls. The walls and screens are painted with solicitation for the infantile

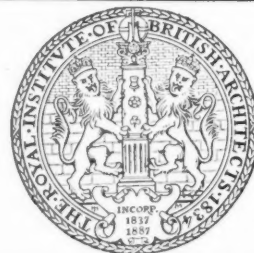
outlook. It is a diminutive world happily arranged for an innocent community. The artistic toys are inexpensive and rank as works of pure art. In this is seen a menace to the German toy trade, and it is to be hoped that the wholesale houses who place such things on the market will quickly avail themselves of the amazing talent of the artists responsible for this sensible departure. As previously explained, it is not the purpose of this review to rewrite Mr. Wilson's Catalogue, but it will be only fair to mention the names of some of the artists who have contributed to the success of the exhibition. Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Christie and Mr. F. W. Troup with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Macintosh are to the front; Mr. Stabler is unrivalled in his fascinating designs for metal work, and Mrs. Stabler's lead figures will be coveted by architects and clients possessing gardens, for they are symbolic in style and finished in execution. It is not too much to say that the present exhibition has afforded the general public a new opportunity, of which they will not be slow to take advantage, to cultivate the artists and craftsmen whose works are on show. It will be recognised that the policy of the Society tends too much towards the creation of a vogue. The artists have no definite idea of what is essential, they ignore the existence of the lower ranks of the people, and wish to ostracise the educated patron. The desire to encourage a middle-class clientèle who will purchase the goods without inquiry, and acclaim the labour of the artists without question, blinds the leaders of the movement to the larger issues, which include the enlistment to their council table of the princes of the manufacturing world, the abolition of the commercial traveller, and the production of sound wares suitable for every home and within the reach of reduced purses. Above all things, a clearing house for design should be established without delay.

Architecture in relation to Health and Welfare.

The Chadwick Public Lectures now in course of delivery include a series of three by Mr. Paul Waterhouse [F.] on "Architecture in relation to Health and Welfare." The lectures will be delivered at the Surveyors' Institution, Great George Street, Westminster, on Thursdays, 30th November, 7th December, and 14th December, at 5.15 p.m., and admission is free. Lecture I. deals with War and Architecture—some causes and effects; Lecture II. Peace and Architecture—the growth and overgrowth of towns; Lecture III., The London of the Future.

Greater London after the War.

Professor S. D. Adshead is delivering, in connection with the University of London, a course of six public lectures on the Town Planning of Greater London after the War. The lectures, illustrated by lantern slides, are delivered at University College, Gower Street, on Tuesdays, 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th November, 5th and 12th December, at 5.30 p.m. Admission is free by tickets to be obtained from the Secretary, Mr. Walter W. Seton, D.Lit., University College, Gower Street.



9 CONDUIT STREET, LONDON, W., 11th November 1916.

CHRONICLE.

The R.I.B.A. Record of Honour : Thirty-sixth List.

Fallen in the War.

FRANCE, 2nd Lieut. ARTHUR ALDERSON [Fellow], Royal Engineers (formerly Canadian Army Medical Corps). Killed in action in France. Aged fifty-three.

LIVESAY, Lieut. GEORGE AUGUSTUS BLIGH [Fellow], South Wales Borderers. Killed in action, 29th May 1916. Aged forty-nine.

BRAITHWAITE, JAMES ELLIS [Associate], West Yorkshire Regiment. Wounded in action, and died in hospital in France. Aged thirty-six.

Private J. E. Braithwaite was the eldest son of Mr. W. S. Braithwaite, architect and surveyor, South Parade, Leeds. He was educated at the Leeds Boys' Modern School, served his articles with his father, studied at the Leeds School of Architecture, and was elected Associate of the Institute in 1906. He was a member of the Leeds Architectural Society, and served on its Council. Associated with his father in practice, he took an active part in the management of the office, and designed several important buildings. He took a deep interest in several political and social societies, and at the time of his death was treasurer of the Mill Hill Ward Liberal Association.

The Opening Meeting.

Considering the times, and the awkward hour of meeting, there was a remarkably good attendance at the Institute last Monday—the Fellows alone numbering over fifty. Among the military members was the President's son, Lt. Adjutant W. G. Newton [A.], who was badly wounded last September; at first, amputation of the arm was feared necessary, but that danger is past and he is now making satisfactory recovery. Captain Burns Dick, whose stirring Call to Arms and stimulating Addresses* to the Northern Architectural Association will be remembered, had come from the far North on forty-eight hours' leave specially to attend the Meeting and had to return to duty the same night. A deep note of sadness was struck at the opening of the proceedings when the long list of names was read of members who had fallen on the battlefield since the Institute last met. The names will be found recorded on the Minutes† and in previous issues of the JOURNAL.

* See JOURNAL R.I.B.A., 5th and 19th December 1914, 18th December 1915.

† Publication of these Minutes is deferred, owing to want of space.

The late Richard Phené Spiers.

At the Meeting of the Institute last Monday, the Hon. Secretary, Mr. E. GUY DAWBER, having formally announced the death of Mr. R. Phené Spiers, made the following remarks:

Of the merits and attainments of Mr. Phené Spiers I need not speak in this room. His work and influence as Master of the Royal Academy Architectural School, his special gifts for research, his literary industry, his rare skill as a painter of architectural subjects, are known to us all. I would commend to your notice the very interesting memoir of Mr. Spiers, by Professor Lethaby, in the current issue of the *JOURNAL*, in which eloquent tribute is paid to his personality and genius. Mr. Spiers served on the Council of the Institute for fifteen years, was for twenty-two years a member of the Literature Committee, and for eleven years its Chairman. He was the author of numerous Papers in the *Institute TRANSACTIONS*, and a valued contributor to our debates. I beg to move the following Resolution:

That the Royal Institute of British Architects do record its high estimate of the valuable and productive labours of its late distinguished Fellow, Richard Phené Spiers, for the advancement of architecture, and its grateful appreciation of his eminent services as a Member of Council and of the Literature Standing Committee; and that the Institute do record its sense of sorrow at his loss, and do offer to his near relatives its sympathy and condolence with them in their bereavement.

Professor BERESFORD PITE [*F.*], in seconding the motion, said:—Mr. Spiers was in a personal relationship to very many members of the profession; at the Royal Academy Schools generations of us knew his personality very well. And even though it may seem strange to say so, in the somewhat remote days when I sat there, Mr. Spiers seemed to belong to a past tradition, that of the old Central European school of architectural thought and culture. The skies have changed, the horizon is altered, and the school which Mr. Spiers then represented is practically again the dominant school of architectural thought. The fact is that Mr. Spiers' scholarship and learning, his taste and abilities as an architect, partook of the permanent, rather than of the ephemeral qualities of architectural studentship; and it is to be lamented, I think, that he has left no important public building to commemorate a memory which is certainly a very important and dear one to those who knew him. Of Mr. Spiers' ability as an architect I think those of us who knew him well have no doubt at all. The fact that he was able to preserve a clear judgment through the stormy period of the Gothic revival, and to maintain his seat in the Royal Academy School when the atmosphere was certainly very strange to his school of thought, is, of course, a testimony to the value of his character. But if I recall to the members of the Institute the remarkable design he submitted, in the heyday of the revival, of the Church of the *Sacré Cœur*, Montmartre, Paris, in conjunction with Mr. C. J. Phipps, we shall recall a design which would do credit to the most modern school of French thought in our present English period, for the sphere has altered, and the design which Mr. Spiers made, forty years ago now, would be almost fashionable to-day. I think we should also bear testimony to his self-sacrifice. Some few years ago, when a testimonial was presented to him on behalf of his former student friends, he devoted the bulk of it to the founding of that very important collection of architectural drawings at South Kensington known as

the Spiers Collection, and which will do something to hand down his work.

And there is another element of his character, and a somewhat important one, and that is that he was a very influential medium between the profession at home and architects abroad. There was something in Spiers which always attracted the attention of the foreigner; and one has known of foreigners who have come to architectural conferences in England for the special purpose of meeting Spiers, just as on a like occasion they came to see Walter Crane. We have lost a very important channel of communication with the profession on the Continent in losing Spiers, and I am sure our colleagues abroad will share the condolence which we are expressing to his relatives. We had hoped that some recognition of his great services to the Royal Academy would have been bestowed upon him. Also we hoped that he would have lived to receive, shortly, some further recognition from this Royal Institute of the great work he did for the profession, both at the Royal Academy and here, through a long generation.

Lieut. Grissell's Bequest to the Institute.

Intimation has been received from Mr. F. de la Garde Grissell, sole executor, that the late 2nd Lieut. Francis Grissell, *Associate*, has bequeathed to the Institute a sum of £500 free of duty and expressed the wish that it be applied for the benefit of the Library. The late officer, who fell in the fighting on the Somme on the 15th September, was a pupil of Messrs. Nicholson & Corlette and was elected an Associate of the Institute in 1913. After his election he accepted an engagement in Hong Kong for a term of three years. Early in 1915 he returned to England and enlisted in the Artists' Rifles, subsequently receiving a commission in the Coldstream Guards. His portrait was published in the last issue of the *JOURNAL*.

Designs by George Edmund Street, R.A.

The President, in bringing the proceedings to a close last Monday, called the attention of members to the interesting exhibit on the walls of the meeting-room of competition drawings and designs and working drawings of ecclesiastical buildings carried out by the late George Edmund Street, R.A. They represent a selection from a numerous collection of drawings of the architect's works which have been presented to the Institute by his son, Mr. Arthur Edmund Street [*F.*]. On the motion of the President it was Resolved that an expression of the Institute's grateful appreciation of this interesting and valuable gift be entered on the Minutes and communicated to Mr. Street.

The drawings will be on view for some weeks.

Charing Cross Improvement Scheme.

The third and concluding article by Mr. John Burns, Sir Aston Webb, and Mr. Reginald Blomfield on the Charing Cross Improvement Scheme appeared in the *Observer* of the 22nd October.

The writers suggest that the right solution is to shift the bridge and its approaches farther east. The line of the new road-bridge and its approach from the Surrey side would start from a circle or "rond-point" at the junction of the Waterloo with the York Road, and would be carried in a perfectly straight line from that point to the centre of the tower of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. This gives a total length of 3,300 feet from the centre of the "rond-point" to the point at which the axis line intersects the wall of St. Martin's churchyard, a length amply sufficient for the sug-

gested width of the new bridge, about 120 feet. At the intersection of the roadway with the West Strand a "place" might be formed, and by shifting the Charing Cross monument a few feet to the south this would also be on the axis line.

On the Surrey side the area to the south (or Lambeth) side of the new approach to the bridge would be assigned to the Company for their new station, leaving plenty of room for this and for a large "place" on the north side of the new station, occupying the triangular square formed by the existing buildings on the north-east side of Waterloo Road, and the façade of the new South-Eastern Railway station. It would be possible to get a site here for the station and hotel at least four times as big as the present Charing Cross site, with, of course, extension of the line of entry for the rails, and without interfering with important traffic roads. The site could indeed be extended south just as far as necessary.

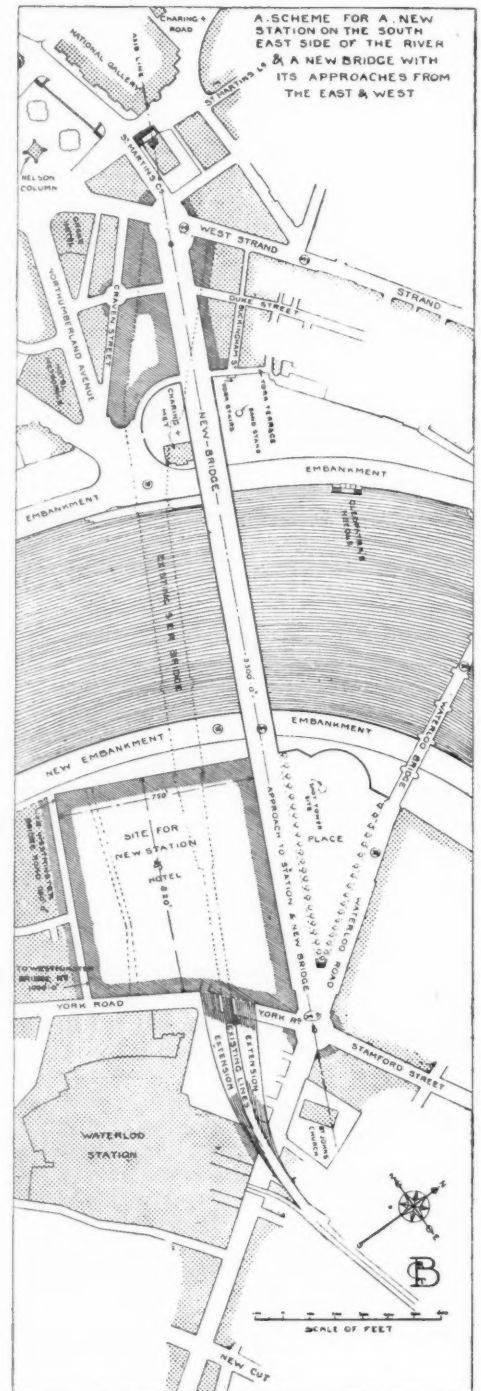
The area proposed to be taken over is occupied by unimportant buildings, owned for the most part by public bodies, and an opportunity would be given of dealing at the same time with the south approach to Waterloo Bridge by means of a triangular "place" about 600 feet wide at the base next the river, and something over a thousand feet from the river end to the centre of the "round-point" in the Waterloo Road. Ultimately the foreshore, now a mud flat at low tide, should be reclaimed and laid out as an embankment and garden at a lower level, as on the opposite side of the river. On the west side the scheme would leave the larger part of the ground now occupied by the station and its approaches free for development, and would do away with that shabby little lane, Villiers Street.

Lastly—and it is not the least important consideration—the new roadway would not interfere with the railway bridge, and would leave the Company free to build their new station and rearrange their traffic with a minimum of inconvenience. The new bridge, being a high level bridge, would avoid all difficulties of navigation, levels and gradients, would leave free access from Northumberland Avenue to the Embankment as at present, and would avoid any interference with the existing tramlines.

As regards the question of finance, the writers point out that, if the new bridge is not built the only means of relieving the traffic will be to double Waterloo Bridge, which is barely 50 feet wide out to out. The effect of this aesthetically on the bridge is doubtful, but the point is that the very considerable cost of this should, if saved, be reckoned to the credit of the new bridge.

In the second place, it is obvious that the Company can acquire the larger site necessary on the south side for the price that will have to be paid for the existing site on the north side. This being so, it leaves to be found the cost of the new bridge and its approaches and the new station and its approaches, with incidental expenses. London, with the assistance of Imperial resources and possibly of private generosity, should find that cost small compared with the practical and aesthetic gains, and it is believed that when the London County Council takes up the matter as it has promised to do there will be no insuperable obstacles in the way of its being carried out after the war.

On some such lines as these the writers urge that an unrivalled opportunity presents itself of carrying out a far-reaching improvement in the civic architecture of London, a scheme of very real benefit to the public, and a superb national memorial of the war.



CHARING CROSS IMPROVEMENT SCHEME, suggested for consideration by Mr. JOHN BURNS, SIR ASTON WEBB, and Mr. REGINALD BLOMFIELD.

Mr. H. Cosmo Bonsor, Chairman of the Managing Committee, Chatham and South-Eastern Railway, in a letter to the Press, states that the strengthening of the Charing Cross Bridge is an urgent and pressing necessity, and the Company cannot take the responsibility of risking the safety of the public by delay. They have, therefore, no alternative but to reintroduce the Bill in the present Session of Parliament to give them the necessary powers to spend the comparatively small sum of £170,000 in strengthening the bridge. He goes on to say that the large and ambitious scheme of improvement proposed by people absorbed in æsthetic and artistic ideas would take twenty to twenty-five years to carry out and would cost many millions. The spending of the £170,000 is negligible compared with such expenditure and can have no effect on the ultimate carrying out of any scheme which might be decided on.

Australian Federal Parliament House Competition :

A letter to the President from the Office of the High Commissioner of Australia, dated 27th October, states that a cablegram has been received from the Department of Home Affairs, Melbourne, to the effect that the date up to which designs for this competition may be received has been extended from 31st January to 30th April, 1917.

The President has sent the following reply to the letter from the Office of the High Commissioner published in the last issue of the JOURNAL [p. 323] :—

9th October 1916.

*The Official Secretary, High Commissioner's Offices,
72 Victoria Street, Westminster.*

SIR,—The Royal Institute of British Architects begs to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 18th September citing the cablegram received from the Commonwealth Government.

The Royal Institute fears that it did not make sufficiently clear the very serious objections which in its opinion exist against the resumption of the competition during the War. Owing to the fact that all the architects of Great Britain and the Allied Nations who are of military age, and large numbers also of the architects of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, are now serving with the Forces, they would be shut out from any chance of competing. A competition in these circumstances would be practically confined to neutral countries and would be in no sense international, as advertised in the original conditions.

The Royal Institute feels very strongly that if the competition is resumed now the architects of neutral countries would have a preponderating advantage over those of the Empire and its Allies, and no real opportunity would be given to Australian architects, the architects of the Dominions, or those of the Mother Country and the Allies, who are taking their part in the great War. Apart from this grave objection on patriotic grounds, the narrowing of the area would obviously greatly minimise the chances of securing the best result.

The Royal Institute feels that the serious objections to which it has ventured to call your attention far outweigh the one advantage of finding employment on this particular building immediately after the War.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

ERNEST NEWTON, *President R.I.B.A.*

Sir John Burnet has sent the following correspondence for publication :—

Department of Home Affairs, Melbourne.

9th August 1916.

Sir John J. Burnet, LL.D., R.S.A.

SIR,—Resumption of this competition to select an architect for the Parliament House was announced by the

Australian Government, 2nd August 1916, and has been communicated to the one hundred and fourteen previously registered competitors and published generally.

The conditions are exactly as when first published 30th June 1914, per programme enclosed, except that enemy subjects will be ineligible, and that the date for receiving designs has been extended from 31st March 1915 to 31st January 1917, leaving the period for completion equal to that when postponed 25th September 1914.

I sincerely trust that nothing will prevent your honoring, in conjunction with the remaining selected architects from friendly countries, the Government's reconsideration of a previous letter dated 16th November 1914, and now accept as a most urgent requirement its official renewal of your appointment dated 25th June 1914 to act as adjudicator. The reappointment is being forwarded, and comprehends the same arrangements as previously entered upon, and the date of your meeting at London should accordingly be about March next.

I feel keenly that the Commonwealth's duty towards those of the profession who entered upon the work of the competition is to keep faith in every respect possible, and that, of course, implies retaining the highest standard of adjudication upon which they were induced to enter and, in many cases, to do a great amount of work.

Professor Wagner being unavailable, his successor has, in accordance with Condition 2.26, been nominated in the person of the Russian, Eliol Saarinen, of whose international standing naturally you do not need to be informed, and of whom you may recall among his score of competitive honours the second prize for the Australian Federal Capital City.—Yours truly,

(Sgd.) WALTER B. GRIFFIN,

Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction.

Department of Home Affairs, Melbourne.

15th August 1916.

Sir John J. Burnet, LL.D., R.S.A.—

DEAR SIR,—Following my cablegram to-day, acquainting you of the decision of the Commonwealth Government to resume the Federal Parliament House Architectural Competition, I desire to reaffirm your appointment as adjudicator in accordance with Mr. Kelly's letter to you of 25th June 1914 (copy herewith).

I find from the papers left by my predecessor in office that in connection with the postponement of the competition that gentleman took the step of cancelling the arrangement with you. Such action is to be regretted, and the letter addressed to you in this connection is withdrawn. This Government is fully appreciative of the prestige which your support has already given to the competition and of the advantages to be derived from your continued association with the project.

With regard to the meeting of the adjudicators in London, it is now proposed that this should take place in March 1917.

I may add that, it being necessary to appoint a new adjudicator in place of Professor Otto Wagner, the nomination made by the Federal Capital Director of Designs and Construction will be communicated to you as early as practicable.—Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) KING O'MALLEY,

Minister for Home Affairs.

6th October 1916.

Walter B. Griffin, Esq.,

DEAR SIR,—I am favoured with your letter of the 9th August in which you confirm the intimation, cabled to me by the Minister of Home Affairs on the 15th August,

of the resumption of the Federal Parliament House Competition announced by the Australian Government on the 13th June 1914; and you express the hope that I may be willing again to accept the position of one of the adjudicators to which I was then appointed, but which was cancelled by Mr. Archibald's letter of 16th November 1914, in which he intimated that the competition had been "indefinitely postponed" on account of the outbreak of war.

I gather from your letter that only 114 applicants were registered competitors in 1914, and that you are resuming the competition on that basis?

In the list of towns which are named in the "Conditions of Competition" (page 1) as the source of distribution of "conditions," one is German, one Austrian, four are British, one is Italian, one French, one Russian, one Spanish, one Swedish, and one American. As the German and Austrian have been deleted, only three belong to neutral countries, and the others are still at war. Before definitely accepting the appointment, I would like to know: (1) the different nationalities of the competitors originally registered; (2) the number of each nationality, and (3) whether you have any reason to believe that those registered from the British Empire, from Italy, France, Russia, and elsewhere, are likely now to be able to submit designs.

Here in any case our manhood up to forty years of age is engaged in military service, and many above that age are engaged in various branches of home service, and I understand that Australia has recently accepted "conscription" or its equivalent. It seems to me, therefore, that the chances of an international competition are remote.

As the two French Societies of Architecture have intimated to the R.I.B.A. that they do not desire to enter into competition during the war, I am communicating with Mons. Victor Laloux, my proposed French colleague on the Jury.

It seems regrettable that you did not consult with the adjudicators before determining to resume the competition and as the result published my name as adjudicator before getting my adhesion.

Awaiting your reply, I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

JOHN J. BURNET.

P.S.—Meantime I have cabled the Minister for Home Affairs as follows:—

"Letter received, have written. Kindly withdraw my name as Assessor pending your reply.—BURNET."

6th October 1916.

The Hon. King O'Malley,

DEAR SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 15th August confirming your cablegram of the same date in which you intimate the decision of the Commonwealth Government to resume the Federal Parliament House Competition, and in which you very kindly express the desire to reaffirm my appointment as adjudicator in accordance with Mr. Kelly's letter to me of the 25th June. By the same post I received a letter from the Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction intimating the appointment of Mr. Eliel Saarinen in place of Mr. Otter Wagner, and giving details of the competition of which I was not aware. I enclose a copy of a letter I have addressed to the Director on the subject, and must await his reply before accepting the appointment which you so kindly offer.

I need not I hope assure you of my continued and keen interest in the great work you have before you, but you will, I think, readily appreciate that I cannot definitely

accept reappointment as a member of the Jury until I have some assurance that under present conditions the competition is really likely to be the international one originally intended, and until I know what my colleagues (now Allies) feel in the matter.

I have the honour to be, your obedient servant,

JOHN J. BURNET.

P.S.—I have cabled you as follows: "Letter received, have written. Kindly withdraw my name as Assessor pending your reply.—BURNET."

Sir Charles Barry's Compasses.

An interesting relic has been added to the Institute Collection by the presentation of a pair of compasses used by the architect of the Houses of Parliament, Sir Charles Barry, up to the date of his death in May 1860. Since that time they had been used by his son, the eminent engineer, Sir John Wolfe-Barry, K.C.B., F.R.S. [*Hon. A.*], by whom they were presented to the Institute on 23rd March last.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Vaulting of Winchester Cathedral.

30th October 1916.

To the Editor, JOURNAL R.I.B.A.,—

SIR,—In looking over my paper on "The Vaulting of Winchester Transept," just published in the JOURNAL, I regret to find that I have, with stupid inadvertence, misconstrued the perfectly plain language of what I quoted from my friend Mr. John Bilson on this vaulting. In saying that his remark on page 302 of his paper entitled "The Beginnings of Gothic Architecture" qualifies what he had said on page 301, I am in inexcusable error. His very true statement about the vault of the "northernmost bay of the east aisle of the north transept" does not in any way qualify what he had said about the vaulting of the "reconstructed bays." It merely gives important additional information, and shows that he had recognised the existence of the three forms of vaulting of which my paper treats—a fact which I ought more clearly to have brought out.—Yours very truly,

CHARLES H. MOORE [*Hon. A.*].

NOTICES.

Licentiates and the Fellowship.

The next Examination of Licentiates desiring to qualify for candidature as Fellows will take place in January, 1917. Applications for admission to the Examination must be sent in by the end of the current year. Full particulars may be had on application to the Secretary R.I.B.A.

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